



## **Farmers invited to have their say in finding affordable electricity solutions**

**20/07/2018**

Food and fibre producers in New South Wales and Queensland are encouraged to share with researchers their experiences around securing affordable electricity.

A study looking into options to provide better access to more affordable energy for those on the land is being conducted by Cotton Australia, NSW Irrigators' Council (NSWIC) and Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF). The study is funded by Energy Consumers Australia as part of its grant process for consumer advocacy and research projects for the benefit of electricity consumers.

The project is exploring the challenges agricultural producers face in installing solar generation assets on farm and their ability to feed excess energy back into the grid. The aim is to better align agricultural energy consumers and network business interests in relation to grid-connected solar on farm and identify possible future opportunities with the network distribution businesses for renewable energy projects through rural Queensland and NSW.

As part of the study, [an online survey](#) has been launched and field visits and focus group sessions are to be run in regional areas over the coming month to gather the views and experiences on on-farm solar installation from farmers and irrigators.

"We encourage farmers to be involved in the research and embrace the opportunity to have their views heard," NSWIC Policy Manager, Stefanie Schulte, says.

"It's important we hear from farmers and irrigators so we can make a strong and viable case to regulators, in order to enact meaningful change for those on the land."

"For Australian agriculture to remain strong at a local and international level in the long-term, we require solutions to this complex electricity issue."

Cotton Australia policy officer, Jennifer Brown, says there are different ways farmers could be involved.

"All farmers and irrigators in New South Wales and Queensland can express their views on the barriers to affordable electricity by completing our online survey," Ms Brown says.

"This will help the researchers obtain a solid understanding of the range of energy issues farmers manage, and talk to producers who have installed on-farm solar generation assets or those thinking about doing so."

“We will also run small focus groups in regional areas, and these will complement a number of field visits. This combination will help us thoroughly understand the problems, and, importantly, devise practical and enduring solutions.”

**More details:**

- Complete the survey: <https://goo.gl/forms/LLHcGirF2QiK9DrC2>, or call research partner Kriti Nagrath of the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney on (02) 9514 4399
  
- Attend a focus group
  - Bundaberg, QLD – 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 at Canegrowers, Bundaberg from 1pm. To RSVP, call (07) 4151 2555 or email [bdb\\_office@bdbcanegrowers.com.au](mailto:bdb_office@bdbcanegrowers.com.au).
  - Narrabri, NSW – 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 at CRDC Offices, 2 Lloyd Street, Narrabri from 12.30pm. To RSVP, call Alec Macintosh on 0428 618 004.
  - St George, QLD – 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2018 at AgVet & Qld Cotton Offices, Thallon Road, St George from 12.30pm. To RSVP, call Jane Hill on 0419 259 194.
  - Deniliquin, NSW – 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2018, location TBC. To RSVP, call Stefanie Schulte on (02) 9264 3848

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